

**Iowa Department of Education
Report 2006
As Required by House File 2792
Statewide Graduation Requirements**

Legislation passed during the 2006 Iowa legislative session required the Iowa Department of Education (DE) to report on Iowa school districts regarding their implementation of graduation requirements effective with the class of 2011 consisting of four years of English language arts, three years of mathematics, three years of science, and three years of social science pursuant to Iowa Code section 256.7, subsection 26 by January 1, 2007. Per HF 2792, the department was required to submit this report to the chairpersons and ranking members of the senate and house of representatives standing education committees and to the chairpersons and ranking members of the joint appropriations subcommittee on education by January 1, 2007.

Survey of districts: The Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Planning, Research and Evaluation reviewed graduation requirements for all 365 school districts in Iowa using the Graduation Requirement File from the Spring 2006 Basic Educational Data Survey (BEDS). In this file all districts have indicated their graduation requirements for students in the 2006 graduation class as well as requirements currently in place (as of May 2006) for students graduating in 2011. Students who will graduate in 2011 are typically in eighth grade during the 2006-07 school year. Districts annually provide this data through spring BEDS.

Review of Iowa law and administrative rules: Per HF 2792, students in the graduating class of 2010-2011 shall complete four years of English and language arts, three years of math, three years of science, and three years of social studies. Iowa Administrative Code permits districts to locally determine the specific course options that are permitted and required for graduation. Therefore, a district may locally determine that a course in animal science, for example, contains the necessary science content to qualify as an option for a full or partial science credit.

Findings: The graduation requirements for school districts were compared to the core curriculum of four years of English and language arts, three years of mathematics, three years of science, and three years of social science (4-3-3-3). Fifty school districts already had the requirements in place for their 2006 graduates. Two hundred nine school districts already have the requirements for students planning to graduate in 2011. Twenty-four districts provide education for their 12th grade students using an agreement with another district.

One hundred thirty-two districts indicated that they had not yet adopted the requirement for students graduating in 2011. Sixty-two of the districts do not yet have requirements for four years of language arts in place for 2011. Seventy-two districts do not yet have the requirement of three years of mathematics in position for 2011. One hundred districts

need additional credits in science to meet the three-year criteria. Twenty-nine districts do not yet have three years of social science required for students graduating in 2011.

Of the 132 districts yet to require 4-3-3-3 many districts (49) are short in only one subject from the requirement. Forty-three districts need to increase their requirements in two of the subjects. Thirty-two districts indicated that they must increase their requirements in three of the subjects. Eight districts need to increase their requirements in all four areas to meet the 4-3-3-3 requirement. No later than the 2010-2011 school year, all districts will require a minimum of 4-3-3-3 for their graduates.

Additional findings: The state of Iowa currently has a shortage of teachers in high school mathematics and science. Should there be restrictive modifications to the requirements established in HF 2792, many Iowa districts would be unable to meet the requirements due to teacher shortages.

Recommendations: The Iowa Department of Education does not recommend any changes to the graduation requirements established in HF 2792.